

REFLECTIONS

PHYSICAL and MORAL,

UPON THE

Various and numerous uncommon
PHENOMENA in the AIR, WATER, or
EARTH, which have happened from the
EARTHQUAKE at LIMA, to the present
Time.

In a Series of FAMILIAR LETTERS
from a MEMBER of PARLIAMENT in TOWN to
his FRIEND in the COUNTRY.



- LONDON,

Printed for A. MILLAR in the Strand.

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REFLECTIONS

PHYSICAL and MORAL, &c.

LETTER I.

SIR,

YOU have often remarked in Conversation, that these last nine or ten Years have produc'd more Earthquakes and other unusual Phenomena in Nature, than ever happen'd in the World in the same Space of Time since the general Deluge. You observed too, upon the Occasion, as I remember, that you must look upon them as preparatory to some great Event, which seem'd to be near at hand, and consequently, as Signs sent to rouze Mankind out of their present Lethargy. The late very uncommon, as well as extraordinary Commotions in the Water, observ'd first at *Portsmouth*, then felt in *Holland* and other Places to the Northward, and immediately succeeded by the total Destruction of one of the most opulent, populous, and, to the Eye (as view'd from the River *Tagus*) most magnificent Cities in *Europe*, naturally brought your Remarks to Mind, and led

me into a Train of Thinking upon so interesting a Subject. I believe I may be allow'd to call it the most interesting of all Subjects at this Juncture; since an Earthquake, the most terrible of all Divine Judgments, may, in the smallest Space of Time, bury a whole People without Distinction of Rank, Age, or Sex, in one promiscuous Ruin.

IF we cast our Eyes upon the Accounts which successively and almost daily arrive, of Earthquakes still happening in different Parts along the Coasts of *Spain*, *Portugal*, and other Places, we shall be tempted to think, that the dreadful Catastrophe of the unhappy City of *Lisbon* is but *the Beginning of Sorrows*: And when we reflect upon the Shock perceived the 17th of the same Month in the County of *Cumberland*, which, by the Account we receiv'd of it, was more violent than any yet felt in this Island within the Period I mention'd, we shall be apt to fear, that God is about to revisit this Nation with a heavier Hand; both which Considerations ought most certainly to awaken our Attention.

NOR shall I confine myself to the Subject of Earthquakes only. The numerous and uncommon luminous Appearances, whether as Meteors, or as Resemblances of what we term the *Aurora Borealis*, which have been observed within this Period of Time, together with the late surprising Hurricane in the *Venetian Territories* upon the *Adriatick Gulph*; and the late much more astonishing

nishing Account which we received from *Denmark* of the Thunder, Lightning, and uncommon warm Weather in so high a Latitude as *West Greenland*, certainly merit our Regard; as they all evidently proceed from the same Cause, and all seem plainly to point to the same End.

OUR Philosophers have taken infinite Pains to find out what they call the *Natural Causes* of these Phenomena. They have visited *Etna* and *Vesuvius*; they have explor'd the Depths of Mines; they have ransack'd the very Bowels of the Earth, to know what Materials Nature makes Use of upon these Occasions, in which she seems sometimes to deviate from those Laws, which they themselves have been pleased to assign her. Chymistry has been tortur'd a thousand ways to explain the Mode of Operation which Nature is supposed to follow. The well known Experiment of the violent Explosion join'd with actual Fire, which arises from the Mixture of two actually cold Bodies, such as an Oil and Spirit, and the artificial Earthquake produc'd by a Mixture of Filings of Steel-sulphur and Water, gave them Hopes that their Researches were crown'd with Success; and the numerous Experiments lately made in Electricity, confirm'd them in the Opinion of their having trac'd Nature thro' her hitherto untrack'd Paths in the Clouds; visited her aerial Magazines of Thunders and Lightnings, Storms and Tempests, and penetrated into the very inmost Recesses of that imaginary

Being. Hypotheses have been invented many Ages ago to account for all the various Operations of Nature, and supported by all the Force of the most abstract and subtile Reasonings. These have appear'd in a Kind of Succession, just as the later Philosophers thought they saw much clearer into the Nature of Things, and consequently fancied themselves much wiser than their Predecessors. Thus the *Aristotelian* seems to have triumph'd over all which preceded it ; that in great Measure gave Way to the *Cartesian*, and the *Cartesian* seems now to be almost wholly exploded by the *Newtonian*. Each System had its zealous Partizans in its respective Day ; nor did the more novel Opinion prevail without the warmest Opposition. Even Religion was lugg'd in to support the *Aristotelian* Philosophy ; and national Prejudice frequently interfered in the Disputes between the Followers of *Des Cartes* and *Newton*, as each was jealous of the Honour of his respective Country. Theories have been fram'd, and new ones are continually framing in different Branches of the same System. Experiments are produc'd, and frequently strain'd as may best serve the Purpose of the Author of each Theory. Many instances of this Kind might be given ; but I shall wave this Subject at present, as it would draw me off too much from my present Design.

If then we examine the Writings of all the Naturalists who have treated of this Subject, we shall

shall find that they agree unanimously in this Point : That there is an actual Fire which pervades the whole Universe : That this Fire is the first, or principal Agent or Cause, not only of all luminous Appearances in the Atmosphere ; but of all extraordinary Commotions in the three other Elements, whether denominated Earth, Air, or (if I may be allow'd the Term) Water-quakes. And that the different Effects observable on all these Occasions arise from the Quality and Quantity of the Materials, and the greater or less Opposition the Fire meets with in its Line of Direction.—Thus far our Philosophers are able to go, but no farther. Should they attempt to explain, How, or Why the Fire comes to be collected into a greater Body at one Time than another ; at what Time we may expect such an Event; or which Way we may guard against the terrible Effects of this their chief Engineer, we should find them, if they depend upon their own Principles, as much at a Loss as the most illiterate of Mankind. You will naturally ask me, of what real Service therefore all their boasted Discoveries are to Mankind, with respect to the present Subject ? I must here confess myself at a Loss for an Answer. Nay, I am apt to think the Knowledge of the poor *Caribee* Indians, who are absolute Strangers to the very first Rudiments of Learning, to be infinitely more useful. They, tho' totally ignorant of the Causes of Hurricanes, can by certain Signs, which they have learn'd from the

the Experience of their Forefathers, not only prognosticate the Approach, but even (as I have been well assur'd) give a shrewd Guess at the Number of Hurricanes which will happen in a Season : And, I remember, our Countrymen in that Part of the World sometimes apply to them for Information, as that Season approaches. I would by no means be thought to detract from the Merit of those great Men, who have dedicated their Time to these laborious Researches into Nature. I look upon them to be shining Ornaments of the respective Ages in which they lived. But when I see the generality of Mankind implicitly adopting their Opinions ; resting supinely on what they term *Natural Causes*, and flattering themselves with fallacious Calculations of the Odds, whether such or such an Event (an Earthquake, for Instance) may happen at such or such a Time, or in such or such a Country ; according to its different Situation as to Climate, or the different Quantity or Quality of the component Particles of the mineral Strata with which it may abound : When I see such Numbers lulling themselves into an ill-grounded Security from this kind of Reasoning, I cannot help thinking that we have need of an infinitely superior Philosophy to guide us in this Kind of Researches. The Philosophy I mean, as you are sensible, can be no other than that of *Moses*. The *Mosaic* Philosophy opens to us an inexhaustible Source of Knowledge. That, and that only, however ne-

glected, or even sometimes treated with Indecency, because not understood, is capable of giving solid Satisfaction to a rational Inquirer, as it accounts for every Thing in a Manner worthy of the Supreme Being, the Great First Cause. *Moses* convinces us that true Philosophy is inseparable from Divinity, and that it is impossible to be a real Philosopher without being a Divine ; or a thorough Divine without being a Philosopher. But how rarely, if ever, do we meet with these two Characters united in the same Person ! Nay, on the contrary, how frequently do we find them at the utmost Variance ?

SOME Philosophers, not able to make the *Mosaic* Writings square with some particular Notions, or some favourite Hypothesis, are too apt not only to call their Veracity in question, but to treat the whole with Contempt ; and from thence take Occasion to decry all Revelation in general. On the other Hand, many well-meaning Divines dazzled with the Parade of what the others call *Demonstration*, think to extricate themselves out of this seeming Difficulty, by asserting " That *Moses* was not a Philosopher, but a Law-giver ; " that he was commission'd by God to instruct " the People only in the Duties of Religion ; " and that whenever he spoke occasionally about " Points which come properly under the Cognizance of the Philosopher, he made Use of " such Expressions as were best adapted to the " Capacity of a plain illiterate People, who had " no

" no other Ideas of the Works of God or the
 " Operations of Nature but what they receiv'd
 " immediately by their Senses." If the Philoso-
 pher admits, or seems to admit of this plausible
 Answer, the Point in Dispute is compromised,
 and the Divine is satisfy'd. Both here are alike
 mistaken, and the Mistake in both arises from the
 same Cause; which is, the Want of a compel-
 tent Knowledge of the *Hebrew Language*, in
 which the *Mosaic Writings* were originally writ-
 ten, and without which Knowledge they can nev-
 er possibly be understood. This Defect, long
 indeed complain'd of, appears in the Writings of
 many great Men, who very justly merit the At-
 tention and Esteem of the learned World. Yet
 still it is a Defect, tho' I think much more un-
 pardonable in the Divine than in the Philosopher.
 Should a Philosopher thus circumstanc'd attack
Moses (and I lament while I say that too many such
 have appear'd in the World) he would be con-
 tinually shooting his Arrows in the Dark,
 and combating Phantoms of his own raising;
 and as long as he continued a Stranger to the
Hebrew Language, so long he would be at a Loss
 to find out the only Clue to guide him out of the
 endless Mazes of those Creatures of the Imagination,
 Hypotheses and Systems. But no Excuse
 in this Case can be admitted for the Divine.
 Train'd up to defend as well as to instruct others
 in a Religion, which is a Stem arising from a
 Jewish Root, how can he possibly fulfil either the
 one

one or the other Duty whilst he remains ignorant of the only Means that can enable him to do it with Success? — But I beg Pardon for this Digression, in which I have only thrown out a few Hints, which I may very probably resume, and treat more fully of in the Course of these Letters.

I OBSERV'D before, that our Philosophers unanimously agree, that Fire pervades the whole Universe. This too was the Doctrine of many of the *Greek* Philosophers, from whom a great Part of what is call'd *Modern Philosophy* seems plainly to be derived. And tho' the Moderns are greatly to be esteem'd and honour'd for the many curious as well as useful Observations they have made, and the immense Pains they have taken in improving what they have receiv'd, yet if we impartially examine the several Notions on which most of their respective Theories are founded, I believe it will be no difficult Matter to trace them backwards up to the same Source. This I shall endeavour to do occasionally in the Course of our Correspondence; and if that should happen to be the Case, I think they cannot be said justly to be intitled to the Honour of having made many new Discoveries.

THE *Greeks* receiv'd their Letters from the *Pheenicians*, and, without Doubt, their Philosophy too, as well as from the *Chaldeans* and *Aegyptians*. The Philosophy of those eastern Nations consisted only of traditional Remains of the first Philosophy receiv'd by *Adam* from *God*, then de-

liver'd down by him to his Posterity, and afterwards publish'd by *Moses* and the Prophets in the sacred Writings. But as these People deviated into Idolatry, they lost the chief Part of their Philosophy ; and when they had totally lost the Knowledge of the true God, they miserably corrupted the Remainder. From this impure Source Philosophy flow'd to the *Greeks*, who corrupted it still more, and quickly reduc'd it to the most wretched Condition. As they had lost the only true Philosophy, they soon ran into the wildest Chimeras, which they call'd Hypotheses, to account for those Appearances in Nature, the Cause of which they could not possibly comprehend. To explain how, or by what Means the Universe existed ; how, or by whom it was formed ; who, or what first gave Motion to Matter, threw them into infinite Perplexity. To get over this Difficulty (which must ever be insuperable to People so circumstanced) they fell from one Absurdity into another, 'till they at last found themselves intangled in a most inextricable Maze of Error. Some assign'd one Cause, some another. Some asserted Fire to be the first Cause or Producer of every Being ; others attributed this Power to Air or Æther ; others claim'd it for Water ; and some deriv'd it even from the Earth. But still the main Difficulty recurr'd ; not only to account for the first Mover or Cause of Motion, but for that amazing Contrivance and Wisdom, which they could not help observing in the

the Mechanism ; and the Power, which they saw daily exerted in the Government of the Universe. They saw but one Way to conquer this ; which was, to ascribe Intelligence to their respective first Agents ; and, at last, as Ignorance prevailed, they exalted them into Gods. Thus each Element was deify'd in its Turn, and was honour'd with Temples, Priests, Images, or Emblems, with proper Insignia, and Sacrifices, all representative of its respective Powers or Attributes. As it is not my Design at this Time to trace out Idolatry up to its Origin, or to point out its Progress, I shall only just hint,—that Deities were multiplied in Proportion as the Ignorance of their Worshippers increas'd ; till, at last, almost every Vice, for Instance, Murder, Rape, Lust and Drunkenness, had its respective God ; and I cannot help observing upon the Occasion, that the ruling Passion of the Priest was generally the darling Attribute of his peculiar Deity. Some Philosophers indeed, of superior Parts, ashame'd of the Philosophy as well as Religion which prevail'd in the Times they liv'd in, very wisely discarded both, and describ'd the First Cause as a Spirit or Intelligence pervading the Universe,—as every where present, and animating and governing the whole like a Soul or Mind : but still, for Want of a proper Guide, were involv'd in perpetual Doubt and Obscurity, whilst others struck a bold Stroke at once, roundly asserted Matter to be infinite and eternal, gave

it Motion as an essential Property, imputed the Formation of every Thing they saw to Chance, left the Preservation as well as Government of the Whole to the same unmeaning Term, and so commenc'd downright Atheists.

If we are surpriz'd at the strange Absurdities, and monstrous Conclusions drawn from the wretched Philosophy of those Times, how must our Amazement increase, if we should see the same shocking Doctrines reviv'd, and Atheism inculcated, as far as it was thought safe to do it in this enlighten'd Age ; which is not only blest'd with the Advantage of Revelation, but lays Claim to the highest Improvements in Philosophy ? What might be term'd Ignorance or Want of Light in the former, will in these be call'd downright Impiety : It is the highest Insult upon the common Sense as well as Religion of their Country : Nay, it is a Crime for which our Language yields no adequate Expression. But that there have been such *, is a Truth as melancholy as it is notorious.— You will excuse, I hope, this short Sketch of the State and Progress of human Philosophy. St. Paul complain'd that in his Time the heathen World, by Wisdom, *i. e.* their human Philosophy, had totally lost the Knowledge of the true God, and from thence inferr'd the Necessity of Revelation,

* See *Pantheisticon*, or Motion essential to Matter, publish'd by Toland in the Year 1720.

When the same Philosophy is reviv'd by some Men, which naturally tends to reduce us once more to the same deplorable State, I think we ought to have Recourse to the *Mosaic Writings* in their original Language for an Antidote against so fatal a Poison.

As Mankind in general had not only deviated from the true Philosophy, as well as Religion : had not only run into gross Idolatry, but had attributed the first Formation of all Things to every Cause but the right one, it was certainly worthy of the only true God to assert his own Right, and reclaim those Powers which they had so falsely attributed to his Creatures. To answer this great End, *Moses* was commission'd to write his History, which is designed to set Mankind right in this Particular. The chief Objects of their Worship were the Sun, Moon, and all the Host of Heaven, to which they assign'd various Emblems representative of their Powers, and gave various Names expressive of their respective Attributes. To convince Mankind that these Objects of their Worship were as much, and as really Creatures as the meanest Reptile, Vegetable or Fossil, *Moses* informs us in the first Chapter of his History,—that at a certain Period of Time, which he terms *the Beginning*, God created the Heavens (for the Word is plural in the *Hebrew*) the primary Object of their Adoration ; to whose Powers they attributed the first Formation of all created Beings, and consequently Rain, Wind,

Meteors,

Meteors, Thunder, Lightning, Inundations, Earthquakes, &c. God at the same Time, as he tells us, created likewise the Earth, as an Habitation or Place of Residence for all Creatures of every Genus and Species whom he had determin'd to form and bestow the Gift of Light upon ; that is, that God created or produced into Being out of Nothing by an immediate Act of his Will, which always includes his Almighty Power, the whole Matter out of which he afterwards form'd the Heavens, Sun, Moon, Stars, whether fix'd or moving, which we term Planets, Land, Water, and all their various Productions ; and the human and animal Race, as Beasts, Birds, Insects, Reptiles, Fish, &c. He next describes the Condition in which that immense Mass of Matter was, which consisted of all those exquisitely small Particles, Atoms or first Elements, of which all material Beings of every Denomination whatsoever are composed. *And the Earth* (by which Term he expresses that immense Mass) *was without Form and void, and Darkness was upon the Faces of the Deep*, or Abyfs. I write the word *Faces* in the plural, because it has no singular Number in the Hebrew, which I shall take Notice of in another Place. *Moses* here plainly shews us ; that this Mass was in that confus'd State, without the least Order or Degree of Composition or Regularity, from which we frame our Idea of what we term a *Chaos*. The Earth (this Mass) was, as it is express'd in the Hebrew,

a Solitude and Inanity or Emptiness ; that is, contain'd all the Materials for Formation, but had not one Thing in or upon it yet reduced to Form or Order, was empty or void of every Thing that had Life or Figure as a compounded Body. These Materials consisted then of Particles or Atoms of different Sizes and Shapes, adapted perfectly to the Formation of the different Bodies of which they were design'd to be component Parts ; each Sort specifically different from the other, and incapable of entering into the Composition of any other Body but that for which each was originally design'd. This will appear extremely plain when I come to treat of the Formation of Things, and the various Operations of what we call *Nature* ; such as Nutrition, &c. Even the largest of these Particles are so exquisitely small, that they elude the Power of the most piercing Eye, tho' assisted by Glasses which magnify to a Size 130,000 Times larger than the real Object. To prove this I need only refer you to the microscopical Observations of the very accurate and very ingenious Mr. *Baker*. This too is most philosophically as well as finely expres'd in *Job* xiv. 8, 9. where the Writer says, “ That tho' the Root should grow old and “ the Stock perish, yet the Stem will bud through “ the Scent or Odour of the Water, and bring forth “ Boughs.” If the Particles proper for the Nutrition of a Plant are so fine as to be convey'd in so subtile a fluid as Scent or Odour, those which

which constitute those exquisitely subtle Fluids, Air, Æther, Light, and what we call Spirit, must be as much beyond our Conception, as they are beyond the Reach of our Senses. *Moses* describes the outward Sphere of this Mass or Earth, as consisting of the Atoms or first Elements of Solids and Fluids, mix'd confusedly together without the least Degree of Cohesion or Order; and, as they were all in a fluid State and equally mix'd among those of Water, he calls the whole upper Sphere *the Waters*. He describes the *Tabor*, Deep or Abyss, as an immense Concavity within the other, and occupied by *Hosbeck*, Darkness, which fill'd the whole. This Darkness could not be a mere negative Quality only; for Light was not yet formed, but must be a Substance in a State of absolute Inaction, but capable of being expanded by Motion, or condens'd by Compression, or by the Suspension of Motion. When *Moses* describes the Darkness in the Land of Ægypt, he terms it, *Hosbeck Apbelah*, Darkness of Darkness; and the Rabbies, to shew its Intensity, say it was four Times doubled, and inclos'd the *Ægyptians* as within a Wall; or, as it is in another Place elegantly describ'd, it was Darkness which might be felt, palpable Darkness. That God at the Creation reduc'd this Earth, or Chaotic Mass, into a spherical Form, (for Matter cannot exist but under some Form) is evident from the Words, *Hugg*, a Circle described by a Pait of Compasses, and *Tebbel*, a Sphere, Terms several

veral Times apply'd to this great Work of God by the sacred Writers, when they mention the Creation. As the true Meaning of these Words, with others of the same Import, is of the utmost Service in clearing *Moses* from the Absurdities and Falshoods which have been father'd upon his divine and truly inestimable History, I shall endeavour in my next Letter to explain them all fully, and, I hope, to your Satisfaction.—*Moses* next proceeds to the great Work of Formation, by which the Materials already created were separated, prepared, and formed into various Bodies, and placed in the respective States for which the infinite Wisdom of the Creator originally design'd them.—*And the Spirit of God moved upon the Faces of the Waters*; that is, an Agent proceeding immediately from God, and endow'd by Him with a Power adequate to the Work, was employ'd to execute such Commands as the Will of God directed. This Agent, call'd the *Ruabb*, Spirit, or Breath, of God (which Signification it has equally in the Greek Language) mov'd; that is, hover'd, brooded upon the *Faces*; that is, the whole Exterior Surface of this chaotic Mass, call'd the *Waters*, over which it was equally diffus'd. The word *mov'd*, here means the same as the Latin Word *incubabat*, and is again us'd under the same Idea in 32d ch. of *Deut.* ver. 11. By this *Motion* or *Incubation*, the Spirit pervade the whole chaotic Mass, put the Atoms, which were before in a total State of Rest or Inaction,

into a proper Degree of Motion, separated those which were to compose the Solids from those which were adapted to form Fluids; condensed, and consolidated, as we may say, the Particles adapted for that Purpose, and form'd that vast Sphere or Shell of Stone, which surrounds the Deep or Abyfs; and adapted the rest to be acted upon, or to act, as the Will of the Almighty should direct.—As I have not Room in this for a particular Detail of the Formation of Things, and the Oeconomy of the Universe, I must refer you to my subsequent Letters, where I propose to treat largely of this Subject, and enter into more critical Disquisitions about the genuine Meaning of the *Hebrew* Words as they occur.

I SHALL at this Time therefore only give you my Sentiments of that most powerful Agent the *Ruabb*, Spirit, in a few Words, and just hint, that it not only was an Agent in the Formation of Things, but was also appointed by God to direct and rule both the moral and physical Oeconomy of the Universe. Numerous Passages might be cited both in the Old and New Testament, where this Power of the *Ruabb*, Spirit, is plainly mentioned, and many others from which it may be clearly deduced. Thus *Gen.* 6th ch. 3d ver. where God says, *My Ruahh, Spirit, shall not always strive or Struggle with Man.* As this was spoken by God previous to his Declaration of destroying Mankind by the Flood, it must plainly refer to the Power of the *Ruabb*, Spirit, in
the

the Capacity of moral Ruler of Beings who were created *Free Agents*, and endow'd with a Power of chusing *Good* or *Evil*: And as the Flood was brought upon the Earth as a just Punishment for the Wickedness of Mankind, it is plain that they had thrown off all Subjection to the *Ruabb*, Spirit, by refusing to hearken to, or obey its *Dictates*, and chusing Evil rather than *Good*.— From the sensible Operations of this invisible and most powerful Agent, God Himself is called *a Spirit*, to give us some faint Idea (and indeed the only Idea we poor Mortals are capable of receiving) of the Nature of that *Essence* of all *Essences*. And as the *Type* in Scripture frequently bears the *Name* of the *Thing typify'd*; hence every Being which is invisible, and seems to act with Power, is call'd *Ruabb*, Spirit; as, for Instance, immaterial Beings, such as Angels, the Mind, the Soul of Man, or Animals, &c. And material Beings, such as Air in Motion, or *Wind*; (which has no other *Name* in the *Hebrew* than *Ruabb*) or Air rarify'd or expanded into Æther, Light, &c. or such as Breath; as in Gen. vii. 22. where *Moses* says, that *all died in whose Nostrils was the Breath of Life*; in *Hebrew*, the *Ruabb*, *Breath*; of the *Ruabb*, *Spirit* of Life. From hence too, by Analogy, the Term *Spirit* is apply'd to those subtile Effluvia, or exquisitely small Combinations of Particles or Atoms, which so powerfully affect our Senses in Fermentation and other Operations in Chymistry. As all these Beings are under the

Influence and Direction of the *Ruabb*, Spirit of God, I shall for the future constantly distinguish this most powerful Agent by the Term *Ruabb* only, by way of Eminence, and, in Contradistinction to all, especially those material Beings denominated *Spirit*, which are all inferior Agents operating by a Power delegated from, and directed in all their Operations by the *Ruabb*. I shall treat of all these Beings in their proper Places ; but at present shall confine myself to the material Agents, which the *Ruabb* more immediately makes use of, either in rewarding the Observance of, or in punishing the Breach of the Laws of God in the moral World. In the former Case the *Ruabb* acts by employing these inferior Agents in the physical Causes of Health, fruitful Seasons, &c. and every thing which we term a physical or natural *Good* ; which are a Part of the Blessings bestow'd upon a religious and virtuous People ; or, in the physical Causes of what we call physical or natural *Evils*, such as Famine, Pestilence, Murrain among Cattle, Tempests, Lightning, Inundations, &c. and, above all, in that most formidable of all the vindictive Strokes of Divine Anger, Earthquakes. And this, either by a partial Infliction of one or more of these *Evils*, to awaken a sinful People, and bring them to a Sense of their Duty, and induce them to reform ; or, by a total Destruction and Abolition of an obdurate and impenitent Land, when the Measure of their *Iniquities* is quite full. Such, for

for Instance, was the almost total Extirpation of the Race of Mankind at the general Deluge ; and such was the total Destruction of the abominable Inhabitants of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, when their Cities were overthrown ; and destroy'd by Fire, and they with the Inhabitants and the whole Plain on which they stood wholly swallow'd up, without the least Vestige remaining ; and, to this Day, mark'd only by a nauseous bituminous Lake, the usual Consequence of a terrible Earthquake ; which was undoubtedly a Part of the Punishment, and compleated the Destruction of that most sinful People. And indeed I may appeal to the History of all Mankind in all Ages, whether moral Causes did not always precede physical ones, either with respect to Blessings shower'd down upon, or with respect to Punishments inflicted upon every respective Nation.

As repeated Accounts arrive by almost every foreign Post, of the Progress of the Earthquake and its direful Effects, attended with still more uncommon and surprizing Circumstances, I am oblig'd to postpone my Sentiments upon the remaining Part of the Formation, together with the Fall of Man, the universal Deluge, the Reformation of the Earth, &c. points, which, when I resume the Subject, I shall treat of to the best of my Abilities, as absolutely necessary to be explain'd, in order to set the *Mosaic* Philosophy in its genuine Light. I shall therefore only just hint at the Formation of some of the inferior Agents

gents employed afterwards by the principal Agent the *Ruabb*, and just mention the State of the Earth before and after the Deluge.—*And God said, let there be Light, or rather be there Light, and there was Light.* This Command, so greatly admir'd by the celebrated Critic *Longinus*, as a Form of Expression worthy of God, was just intimated to the *Ruabb*, and immediately executed ; and this Light, *Or*, in Hebrew, included Fire ; for *Ur*, Fire, is the same *Word* differently pointed, and derived from the same Root, *Or, Lucidum esse, or Lucere* : and this is one of the principal inferior Agents under the Direction of the *Ruabb*, and was form'd in that Portion of Time which is call'd the *First Day*.—Another Agent form'd by the *Ruabb*, at the Command of God, was the Firmament, in Hebrew *Rakiang*, Expanse or Expansion, from the Root *Rakang*, to spread abroad, expand and make thin. This Firmament God call'd *She-maim*, Heavens ; it signifies Airs, Æthers, Sky. What immense Strength and Power was communicated to this Agent by the *Ruabb*, will appear from *Job xxxvii. 18. Hast thou with him spread out the Sky, in Hebrew Shebbakim, Æthers* ; which is, or are strong as a molten Looking glass ? or *Speculum* made of hard solid Metal. Also, *Psalms lxviii. 35. Thy Strength is in the Shehha-kim, Æthers*.—I could cite many more Passages to shew the mighty expansive and compressive Force of the Æthers or Heavens ; but as it would at this Time be foreign to my Purpose, I shall only

only take a very short View of the State of the Earth at its *Formation*, and *at*, and *after* the Deluge.—God next intimated His *Will* to the *Ruabb*, *That the Waters under the Heavens, Æthers, should be gathered together in one Place, or Collection, and that the dry Land should appear.* This Command was instantly executed. The *Ruabb* made innumerable Fissures or Cracks in the vast Sphere of Stone in all Manner of Directions:—Collected the Waters, which constitute much the greater Part of this Globe; impelled them thro' these Fissures into the *Abyss*, separated and form'd all the different Bodies of which the Strata in the Earth are composed, and dispos'd the different Strata, not according to the Laws of Gravity assign'd by our Philosophers, but so as they might be best adapted to the Use and Service of Man, the chief Inhabitant; rais'd those Protuberances we call Mountains; cover'd the Surface of the Earth with *Adamah*, mold impregnated with that immense Variety of Atoms or Particles adapted to Vegetation, Nutrition, &c. made those vast Concavities (which, when fill'd with the Waters, are call'd *Seas*) to contain the Waters which remain'd after the *great Deep* was full; impress'd that Motion in the Waters of the Seas, which we call Tides; which Motion has been since continued by the inferior *Agents*; settled the Communication between the lesser *Deeps*, or Seas, by the horizontal Fissures; and preserv'd the Communica-

tion of all with the *Great Deep*, or *Abyss*, by Means of those *Apertures*, which are emphatically call'd the *Fountains* of the *Great Deep*. Here again I could cite numerous Passages of Scripture, but I omit them till I come to speak more fully to all these Points, which I shall do in their respective Places.—On that Portion of Time call'd the *Fourth Day*, God again intimated *His Will* to the *Ruabb*, that there should be *Luminaries*; that is, *Receptacles* or *Instruments* to contain Light; for that is the true Meaning of the Word *Meor*, a *Luminary*, and *Meorst*, *Luminaries*, in the *Hebrew*. The *Ruabb* immediately form'd the proper Receptacles; collected the Atoms or Particles of Light which were dispersed before, and placed them in those Bodies, which God afterwards distinguish'd by the Names of the *Sun*, *Moon*, and *Stars*; all perfectly dispos'd and adapted to answer the wise and great Ends for which they were *form'd*. This is mention'd in *Job xxvi.* 13. *By his Ruahh he hath garnish'd the Heavens, Æthers.* I have but just touch'd upon the Formation of these inferior Agents of the *Ruabb*, whose Uses and Powers I shall endeavour to explain, together with the *rest* of the *Formation*, when I resume the Subject. I shall only remark, that God is said by *Moses* to have *refted on the seventh Day*;—that He *blessed*, and consecrated that Day as *Holy*, and appointed it as a perpetual Memorial to all Mankind in all Ages; that He, and He only, was the *Creator*, and consequently

quently the *Supreme Governor* of every *Thing* which *existed*. God had now perfectly *fram'd* this vast *Machine*, and regulated all its Motions, and its whole *Oeconomy* by the most perfect *Order*: He is therefore said to have *rested*; that is, God no longer *exerted* His infinite *innate* Power, which He had employed in the Creation and Regulation of the Universe, but committed the Care of continuing the *Motions*, and carrying on the *Oeconomy* of the whole Machine to *inferior Agents*, all subordinate to the Power, and under the immediate Direction of his *Ruabb*. To keep this *great Event* ever fresh in their Memories, God set apart *this Day* in a peculiar Manner; and forbade all *manual Labour*, that Man might employ his whole Time in contemplating, and searching into the Works of God; from whence he would eternally find fresh Causes for Wonder and Amazement, and consequently for Love, Praise, and Adoration of his *Great Creator*. A strict Observance of this great *positive Precept* was constantly *rewarded*; and the Violation of it as constantly *punish'd* by the severest *Judgments*: A Point highly worthy of the most serious Attention of this Country at this terrible Juncture —— The Earth was now *form'd* in its most perfect State, and produc'd every Thing spontaneously, which might contribute to the Pleasure as well as Support of Man. At the Fall a very great Alteration was made; the *natural Fertility* of the Earth was in great

Measure destroy'd; and Man was reduc'd to earn his Bread by hard Labour and the Sweat of his Brows, out of that Adamah, Mold, out of the Atoms or Particles of which he was first form'd: But I shall consider the Nature of this Curse in its proper Place, and make only a few Remarks upon the *Destruction* and *Reformation* of this *Globe* at the general Deluge.—*Moses* tells us, *Gen.* the 6th chap. “That the Wickedness of “ Mankind was come to so great a Height, that “ God was determin'd to extirpate the whole “ Race, except one righteous Man and his Fami-“ ly, whom he preserv'd to repeople this Earth “ after its *Re-formation.*” Man had totally *in-verted* all *moral Order*, God therefore inverted the *Order of Nature*.—Here again was an im-mEDIATE *Exertion* of his infinite Power by the A-gency of the *Ruabb*. God says, *I, even I do bring a Flood of Waters upon the Earth to destroy all Flesh.* This Declaration was made to con-vince Mankind in all future Ages, that God the great *First Cause*, the Creator of this Earth, was also the Author of this most amazing and most ter-rible Catastrophe.—The Manner how this amazing Scene of *Ruin* was brought on, is describ'd by *Moses*, and finely summ'd up in that concise, but strongly descriptive Allusion in the 24th chap. of *Isaiah*, ver. 18, 19. *For the Windows (Cataracts, Flood-gates) from on high are open, and the Foundations of the Earth* (that is the vast Sphere or Arch of Stone, call'd the Foundations of the Earth,

Earth, by the sacred Writers) do shake. *The Earth is utterly broken down, the Earth is clean dissolved, the Earth is moved exceedingly.* Expressions which plainly allude to the breaking up of the Fountains of the *Tehom* or great Deep; the Torrents of Waters descending from the *Heavens* or *Æthers*; the Dissolution of the Body of the Earth; and the great Agitation of all the various Atoms or Particles of which it was composed; which were then blended with the Waters in one promiscuous *Fluid*. I should really tire you, if I was to cite the numerous Passages in Scripture, which all tend to illustrate and confirm the *Mosaic* Account of this astonishing Event: I shall therefore refer you to that sublimely prophetic Chapter, where you will find not only the most just Description of an Earthquake, and its baleful Effects, but also the *moral Cause*; and the *great Event* mentioned in the last Verse, the Approach of which the terrible Earthquake there described, was to *indicate*, and, consequently, to *characterise* the *Time* when it was to be expected.—The Particulars of this great Catastrophe I shall treat of in their Order hereafter, and shall only observe at present;—that the Beginning of this tremendous Scene was by a most universal Earthquake;—that this Earthquake had its Origin from the *Tehom* the great *Deep*, or *Abyss*, when its Fountains were broke up, and the Waters, and whatever else was contain'd in it, were by the same *mighty Power*

violently impell'd from the Center to the Circumference, contrary to the *Laws of Gravity*: That after a Time sufficient to compleat the Destruction and *Dissolution* of the Earth, the *Ruabb*, at the Will of God, *re-form'd* the vast Sphere or Arch of Stone; or, as it is elegantly express'd in the sacred Writings, *laid the Foundations of the Earth*, or *Globe*; made proper Apertures for the *Descent* of the *Waters* into the *Tehom*, or *great Deep*, (which is from thence *emphatically* call'd *the Store-house, or the Treasury of God*) and made innumerable Cracks or Fissures for *wise Ends*, and for *various Uses*:—That as the Waters gradually subsided, the *Ruabb re-form'd* the various Strata of the Earth, in the Manner in which we now behold them in the Wells, Mines, &c. collected and combin'd the various Particles of the various Metals, Minerals, &c. into proper *Masses*, and lodg'd them *variously* in a vast Number of *various Fissures*, and in *various Directions* for the Service of Mankind, and left the Earth in the *Form* and *State* in which we at present behold it: A *State* indeed *greatly inferior* to the former before the Deluge; but *wisely* and *visibly* calculated to diminish the *Means of Luxury*, and to *shorten* the *Lives* of its *Inhabitants*. I shall only observe farther;—that the *Ruabb* left a *perpetual Memorial* of this most *remarkable Event*, in the vast Variety of *Bones of Fishes, Shells, Vegetables, &c.* not only of the largest Size; but even of the most *tender Plants*; which are

found both in the Mountains and in the deepest Mines, both inclos'd in, and lying under solid and ponderous Masses of Stone, Marble, &c.—That the *Ruabb* left these Bodies thus situated, not only as a perpetual Proof of the *Reality* of the Deluge; but as a *farther* Proof of the consummate Skill exerted in the Disposition of the respective Strata; and that the Operations of this most powerful *Agent* were not *limited* by any *Law of Gravity*, but directed by the most *unerring Wisdom*; and adapted not only to the Use and Service of Mankind, but to the *Means* which God makes Use of in dispensing *physical Rewards* and *physical Punishments* to the Nations in His *moral Government* of the World:—That the *Ruabb* was not limited by any *Laws of Gravity*, may be prov'd by an immediate Inspection into the various Strata in Mines, &c. and is still more confirm'd by the Masses or Combinations of the Particles of Gold, the most ponderous of all material Bodies yet known; which are continually found after hard Rains in *Africa*, *Brasil*, and *Chili*, and wash'd down from Eminences vastly above the Surfaces of their respective Plains:—That these Strata were thus dispos'd for the Use and Service of Man, is too obvious to need any Proof or Explanation; and that they are adapted to the *Means*, which God makes Use of in dispensing *physical Rewards* and *physical Punishments* to the Nations in His *moral Government* of the World, will, I hope, appear plainly

plainly to your Satisfaction, when I come to a *Detail of Particulars.* I must just add this too ; — That the *inferior Agents*, as *Air* or *Æther*, and *Light*, including *Fire*, were respectively employ'd in these *Operations*, under the immediate *Direction* of the *Ruabb*.—I think it is now Time to conclude this long Letter, in which I have just thrown together some *general Hints*, as well as the *Shortness* of the Time would permit, as proper for your Perusal at this alarming Juncture. I know you will animadvert upon them with the Candour of a Friend ; and I promise you your Remarks will be receiv'd with the same Candour by a Mind free from Prejudice, and ever open to Conviction. Omissions I have undoubtedly made, and Mistakes I may have been guilty of, from which no Mortal is exempted ; but in Return I can most solemnly assure you, that my *Design* was *good*, and let that plead for me.— You know I have travelled much both by Land and Sea, and have been Eye-witness of many of those Phenomena, which are quite *new* and striking to us, who are born in this Part of the World, when we ramble into the hotter Climates. I mention this as an Advantage which scarce any of our *modern* Philosophers have had, to the best of my Knowledge, excepting Dr. *Halley*, and which, of Consequence, must oblige them to depend upon the imperfect Accounts of others, who, perhaps, had neither Curiosity nor Ability to make proper instructive Observations. I
have

have been in more than one Hurricane both by Sea and Land, where I observ'd not only the Earth in *Commotion*; but all the Elements in *wild Uproar*. I have view'd a Whirl-wind at Sea in the Time of a Hurricane, with its surprizing Effects; and I have, with the utmost Satisfaction, contemplated that amazing *Pheomenon* a Water-spout, in its Formation and Duration till its Dissolution. Many of these I have seen in one Day, and for several Days successively; and some so near as to threaten imminent Danger to the Ship I then sail'd in. I have sail'd over the Spot where a great Part of *Port-Royal* in *Jamaica* once stood; I have seen the Ruins of that Place under the Water; and have view'd the terrible Effect produc'd by that dreadful Earthquake in several Parts of that Island. In the Course of my Travels afterwards by Land, I saw Mount *Ætna*, and had a compleat View of the Mouth of *Vesuvius*, which Mountain I ascend-ed, tho' at that Time not without Danger. I applied afterwards to modern Philosophy for a Solution of these various Phenomena, but without Success. From the immense Quantity of Water which I had seen impell'd upwards through the Water-spouts with the most astonishing Rapidity, I was convinc'd that the Vapours exhal'd only by the Sun, were not sufficient to furnish out those mighty Cataracts of Water, which descend in the rainy Season in those Latitudes; much less could I account for the Reason, why there are no Tides in the *Caspian*,
Baltic,

Baltic, and Mediterranean Seas, by Arguments drawn from very inconclusive Experiments made upon a Pan of Water. But when I apply'd myself to the Study of the Hebrew Language, a new Light beam'd in upon me; and I receiv'd the Satisfaction I had in vain sought for in the Writings of Philosophers. No longer dazzled with the Parade of the great Names of a *Des Cartes*, or a *Newton*, I now acknowledge *Moses* as my only *Master* in *Philosophy*. Had those great Men applied to the Study of this most expressive and most energetic, as well as most ancient of all Languages with their usual indefatigable Assiduity, I am persuaded that the *Mosaic* Philosophy would have appear'd in its genuine Lustre; and if the Gentlemen who write in Defence of Revelation, would pursue this Study, all the Objections and Cavils of Unbelievers would disappear like "Dew before the Morning-sun." By *Moses* I am convinced, that those dreadful Commotions in the Earth and Water, take their Rise from the *Tehom*, great Deep, through these vast Apertures call'd the *Fountains*; that the *Shell* is the *Seat* of these Commotions; and that their Progress is through the *Fissures* which abound in every Part of this Shell, and in all Directions:—That the chief inferior Agents are, the Air or Æther, and Light including Fire;—that they are under the immediate Direction of the *Ruabb*, so as best to answer the wise Purposes of God in His moral Government of the World; and consequently,

that

that these Commotions are, in the *strictest Sense* of the word *Judgments*;—that they are *Partial* only, when sent to *alarm*, and *total*, when appointed to *destroy* an impenitent People; when *the Measure of their Iniquities is accumulated to the height, and the Patience and long Suffering of God is exhausted.*—Can the most able of our *Naturalists* point out any Spot upon this habitable *Globe* where we may be secure?—Can they insure us Safety at either of the Poles more than at the *Æquator*?—Can we dwell any where but upon the Surface of this *Shell*, and is not the *great Deep* every where *beneath us*? Where then can we possibly fly for Safety when God's Judgments are abroad?—The *Earthquake*, by all the Accounts we almost daily receive, still continues its rapid Progress, and scatters Terror and Desolation through the affrighted Nations; and should the *Ruabb* change the *Line* of its *Direction*, in how *small* a Portion of Time might the Bowels of the Earth be the *Grave* of this Island!—Is there then (I know you will ask me) no *Criterion*, no distinguishing *Mark*, by which we may judge of the Approach of this most terrible Scourge? I answer, Yes; but it is to be taken not from the “*Signs in the Heavens, Ethers,*” but from the *Signs of the Times*; not to be deduc'd from *natural*, but from *moral Causes*.—To do this, let us compare the *present State* of our own Country with *that* of those Nations who are now suffering under this severe Stroke

of Divine Vengeance: When we have done that, let us compare *all* with the *State of Sodom* and *Gommorrah* at the Time of their *final Doom*, when all the Elements joined in completing their Destruction; as we are informed they seemed to do at the late shocking Catastrophe of the City of *Lisbon*.—If we examine the *State* of the antediluvian World, as described by *Moses*, we shall find that “all Flesh was corrupt;” that “the Earth was fill’d with Violence; that the whole Bent of their Inclinations, the whole Study of their Thoughts was incessantly at Work, either in contriving or perpetrating *Evil*, either by Fraud or Force:” That there were *Giants* in those Days, Men who knew no *Law* but their *own Will*, and were the Leaders in those inhuman Scenes of Blood and Rapine. These lawless Men are call’d in the *Hebrew*, *Nephelim*, *Emim*, *Rephaim*, and *Gnanakim*, Words all deriv’d from Roots which imply the Idea of Terror, not only from their superior Strength and Stature, but from their Impiety towards God, and their Inhumanity to their Fellow-creatures. These first mighty Butchers of Mankind, were call’d Men of *Name* or *Renown*; that is, *Heroes*, an *Appellation* afterwards frequently given to those powerful *Murderers* and *Robbers* of Mankind, whose *Names* are recorded in prophane History, and seem to have acted upon the same Principles with their antediluvian Predecessors; but in Reality is a Title only due to those truly great Men,

who humanize and protect a People; and who bravely hazard their Lives against a rapacious *In-vader*; or invade a faithless Enemy to procure Reparation for Wrongs done to their injur'd Country. Idolatry, that is, transferring the Adoration due only to the Creator, and paying it to His Creatures, and *Murder* or shedding the *Blood* of an innocent *Fellow-creature*, are Crimes of the blackest Dye in the Sight of God, and by Him commanded to be punished, *even by Man*, without Mercy. That these were the prevailing Crimes before the Flood, is plain from the severe Prohibitions of them so immediately succeeding. As it could not be supposed that so *righteous* a Man as *Noab*, with his small Family, would immediately run into Idolatry after so signal a Judgment inflicted upon the rest of Mankind, of which they themselves had so lately been Eye-witnesses; the first Prohibition after the Flood was, "Not to commit Murder;" a Crime which might have been of the most fatal Consequence to that *infant* Colony. To enforce the Observance of this Precept more strongly, they were absolutely forbidden to even *eat* the Blood of *Animals*, which God had granted them for Food; that every Incitement to *Acts* of *Cruelty* might be remov'd; for I don't in the least doubt but that eating promiscuously all *kinds* of *Animals*, with their *Blood*, was one of the numerous Crimes committed by those Sons of Blood and Rapine among the Antediluvians. Nor do I doubt

but that the eating animal Food was granted to Man under proper Restrictions after the *Fall*, when the *Adamah*, Mold proper for Vegetation was curs'd with a certain *Degree of Barrenness*, and consequently the Vegetables of every kind render'd much more unfit for Nutrition than they were at the Creation. If this was not the Case, to what End or Purpose did God grant *Adam* the absolute Dominion over every *Kind*, and Species of Animals, Beasts, Birds, Fishes, &c. ? Though some Kinds of Animals might be highly serviceable to Man by being employ'd in various Kinds of *Labour*, and even by supplying him with that wholesome Aliment *Milk*, which was undoubtedly a Part of his Food; yet of what Use would Fowl have been to him, if he was forbidden to eat any Thing which had Life? For upon this Principle, Eggs too must have been equally forbidden; since every Egg contains a *vital Principle*, in the Embryo of its respective Species of Fowl, gradually increasing till it comes to its proper State of Maturity: And of what possible Use his *Dominion* over the Fishes in the Sea could have been, or what End his *subduing* them (as he was empower'd to do) would have answer'd, unless it had been to make Use of them for *Food*, is, I must confess, past my Comprehension. We see the Distinction of *clean* and *unclean* Animals; that is, which Kinds *were us'd* for Food and Sacrifices, and which *were not*, was known by *Noab before the Flood*; since in

Gen. viii. 2. he is commanded to take a greater Number of the *former* with him into the Ark than of the *latter*. Nor indeed do I see the least Occasion to have Recourse with Dr. *Cheyne* and others, to this *Grant* of *animal Food* as an Expedient for shortening the *Life of Man*; since that might so easily and naturally be effected not only by the great Alteration made in the *Adamah* or Mold adapted for Vegetation, by a great Quantity of the Particles necessary for Nutrition being carried off by the Waters at their *Descent* into the *Tehom*, or *great Deep*; or by the Effluvia arising through the Fissures, from noxious Minerals, &c. and entering the *Tubuli* of the Vegetables, together with the Particles proper for Nutrition, and incorporating with them, and, consequently, counteracting and diminishing their *nutritious Quality*, and laying a Foundation for various Diseases; but also by floating in the groffer Part of the Air in which we breathe, and being inhal'd with our Breath, or entering our Bodies by the imbibing Vessels; which seems to be the Case in pestilential Diseases incident both to Men and Animals, particularly in those which are highly *infectious*. I may add too, that the putrid Vapours arising from Waters stagnating in the Morasses, and great Number of hollow Places left by the Flood, would conduce greatly to *this Purpose*. This Permission then to *Noah* and his *Posterity* to eat *animal Food*, was, in my Opinion, only a Renewal of the *former Grant* under the

same

same Restrictions: And when God had selected the Race of *Abraham* for His *peculiar People*, after the far greater Part of Mankind had again degenerated, and run into Idolatry ; *Moses* at the Command of God *re-published* this *Permission* with all its *various Restrictions* in *Writing*, which had before that Time been delivered down by *Tradition*. The Prohibition of *eating Blood*, that *mysterious Fluid*, in which the *vital Principle* is contained, was again repeatedly renewed, and inforced by the most dreadful Threatnings, in case of Disobedience. The Breach of this *Command* was to be punished with *Death* ; nay, even *Death* to be inflicted by *God Himself*, and not only upon the *Jew*, but even upon the *Stranger* too who cohabited with him.

“ And whatsoever Man there be of the House of *Israel* or of the *Strangers* that sojourn among you, that eateth any Manner of *Blood* ; I will even set my Faces against that Soul that eateth *Blood*, and will cut him off from among his People. For the *Life* of the *Flesh* is in the *Blood*, and I have given it to you upon the Altar, to make an *Atonement* for your *Souls*.” This is the awful Decree announced by *God Himself* in the 17th chap. of *Levit.* the 10th and 11th ver. By this Precept the *Blood* of the tame clean Animals which were granted for *Food* or *Sacrifice*, was commanded to be brought and offer’d at the Altar appointed for that Purpose ; they were indispensably obliged to the Performance of this Duty ;

Duty; but when they kill'd Animals for Food at too great a Distance from *Jerusalem*, when they were in Possession of *Judea*, or when they caught the wild clean Animals, either Beast or Fowl for Food, they were commanded to kill them by *cutting* the *Fugulars*, and devoutly *pouring* the Blood into a Hole made in the *Adamah*, or vegetable Mold, from whence they themselves, as well as the Animals they killed, were taken, and to cover the *Blood* carefully over with the same Mold; a Practice observ'd by all the *Jews*, who are qualify'd, and allowed to kill Animals for Food to this very Day with the most rigid Strictness. Though there is a *mysterious* Meaning in the *Reason* assign'd by God in the eleventh Verse for this *Prohibition*, which I may treat upon hereafter in its proper Place; yet I can't help being of Opinion, that a *physical* Reason too might be given for it; since there was undoubtedly a *wise Reason* for every particular *Restriction* which God annexed to this *Permission*. The *real Nature* and *Properties* of this *mysterious Fluid* remain still an impenetrable Secret, though it has long been the Subject of the Researches of the most able and most laborious Chemists. —Can we assign the true physical Cause of our *Passions*? Does not the *different Force* of the same *Passion* in different Persons seem to depend upon the *Temperament* of the *Blood*? If one *Passion* may be heightened by some kinds of *Food*, and lower'd by others, which may be prov'd by

by Experiment, why may not Blood, when us'd as Aliment (though its Force may be greatly diminished when prepar'd by Fire) have the like Effect in inflaming some other Passion by some latent inherent Quality, to whose Mode of Operation we are, and ever must be absolute Strangers? Now that it has some such *inherent Quality* is, I think, plainly discoverable from its Effects when us'd as Aliment, and this probably might be one wise Reason for this Prohibition. Our Naturalists will inform you, that those rapacious Animals who live by preying upon their Fellow-creatures, are most fond of devouring their Prey *alive*, whilst the *Blood* is in a *Fluid State*, and yet *reeking*; and that these Animals in their wild savage State seem to be by their very *Nature*, of all others the most cruel and pitiless. I have observ'd that the *hot Blood* of the Prey whilst *living* seem'd to be the most delicious Repast to the more ferocious Kinds of the various Beasts of Prey, and that by a peculiar Instinct, or whatever else we may call it, they seiz'd their Prey in the *same Place* where the *Jews* were directed to *kill* those Animals which were granted them for *Food*. Instances of this in the smaller Kinds of Beasts of Prey are every where to be seen in this Country; where the Poultry of all Kinds, the favourite Food of Polecats, Ferrets, Weasels, &c. are frequently found bit or torn on one Side of the Neck, and the *Blood* only suck'd out, whilst the *Flesh* of the Bird was left *untouch'd*.

Of the largest Kind of these ferocious Animals, I once saw a very singular Instance at *Florence* in the Area of the Great Duke of *Tuscany's* Menagerie, where Spectacles of this Kind are frequently exhibited. A Tyger of a vast Size, which had been for a considerable Time kept fasting, was let out to encounter a young strong Horse, which was appointed for that Purpose. After the two Animals had for some Time shewn a good deal of Address, both in the Attack and Defence, the Tyger with one violent *Spring* feiz'd the Horse by the Neck, threw him, and tearing open the Jugulars, quietly *suck'd* the *Blood* with incredible Eagerness and Pleasure. I observ'd the flanks of this rapacious Monster heave and fall like a Pair of Bellows, by the Actions of Suction and Respiration, and his Belly dilate, and grow more and more turgid, till he had fill'd himself with *Blood*. When he was quite satiated, he quitted the Carcase of the Horse, the Flesh of which he seem'd to despise, and retir'd calmly to his Den, and lay'd himself down to his Repose.

If we continue this Observation with respect to Mankind, we cannot help remarking, that those Nations who live by hunting wild Animals for their *Food*, as the *Indians* in several Parts of *America*, and most of the different Tribes of *Tartars*, and eat large Quantities of the Flesh of Animals newly kill'd, and almost raw; (for when they broil it, they endeavour to retain as much

of the *Blood* as they possibly can to make the Morsel more delicious) we cannot, I say, help remarking, that those People are of all others the most savage and inhuman. Nay, if the Accounts I have read of *America*, are true, several of the *Indian* Nations, especially in the northern Parts of that Country, were arriv'd to such a Pitch of *Brutality* as to eat such of their Enemies as they happened to take Prisoners. May not then the eating *Blood*, especially when so near its *natural* State, contribute by some secret inherent Property (which we can only judge of by its Effects) to *inflame* their Passions, and work them up at last to that Degree of *Barbary*, which is so common among those Savages? The Ancients seem to have been of this Opinion, by the Story they relate of *Diomedes* a *Thracian* Tyrant, who threw *Men* whilst living to be devoured by his Horses, as the best Means of increasing their Speed, and heightening their *Mettle*: And later Historians amongst the *Romans* report, that *Caligula*'s Nurse us'd to *dip* her *Nipples* in *Blood*, whenever she suckled him; and to this they imputed the uncommon *bloody* Temper of that Monster of Cruelty. On the other hand *Homer* tells us, that "the *Galactophagi*, or People who lived upon *Milk*, were of all others the most harmless and inoffensive."—I shall make no Apology for this Digression, in which I have endeavoured to assign a *physical* Reason for this first positive Precept, which was given immedi-
ately.

ately by *God Himself* to *Noah*, and declared to be of perpetual *Obligation* to all his *Posterity* without *Distinction*. I hope you will not think it foreign to the Purpose; especially when you reflect, that this Precept was not only again repeatedly given by *God Himself* to *Moses*, and a strict Obedience to it enjoin'd, under Pain of Death, but was again strongly enforced and commanded to be observed by a Decree of the General Assembly, or Council of the Apostles and other inspir'd Persons, *Acts* 15th chap. where this Decree is twice repeated. I must observe here, that this Decree respected only the *Gentile Converts*, whose Ancestors had for many Ages totally lost all Knowledge of that Prohibition; and that to enforce Obedience to it more strongly, that Council (which is the only One in the whole Christian World, which can ever be supposed to have an incontestible *Claim* to *Infallibility*) publickly declared, that this *Decree* was *confirmed* by the immediate *Sanction* of the *Holy Spirit*. That this Precept was esteemed highly obligatory by the primitive Christians, is evident from its being long observed in the Western, or *Latin Church*, and in the Eastern, or *Greek Church*, even to this very Day. That no Man, or collective Body of Men whatever, have a Right to supersede the Observance of a Law, when they themselves acknowledge that Law to have been given immediately by *God Himself*, and commanded by Him again and again to be observed under the severest

of all Penalties, is, to me, self-evident. That the Observance of it has been long neglected is as evident; and that it could only have been laid aside by that arrogant Set of Men, who most audaciously *assume* a Power of *dispensing* with the Observance of every other *Law* of God, as it may be most conducive to their *temporal Interest*, is too obvious to need any farther Proof or Explanation. Whenever the *Jews* deviated into Idolatry, they were sure to be guilty of a Breach of this Precept, and this Crime was as certainly punished with the utmost Severity; and it is enumerated by the Prophets among the various other Crimes, for which they were at last swept away into Captivity by the *Chaldeans*. Whether the total Disregard of *this Precept*, which has prevailed so long in the *greatest Part* of the *Christian* World, may not be imputed to them as a Crime, and consequently, in some Degree, at least, contribute towards *filling up* their respective *Measures* of Iniquity, I leave to your serious Consideration.

I just hinted, that *one* Reason for the Prohibition of *eating* Blood, might be, that when Men were appris'd of the *mysterious* Nature of *Blood*; a due Sense of the Dignity and Importance of that *vital Fluid*, might be one *Means* of restraining them from *shedding* it *wantonly* or *wickedly* at the *Instigation* of their *Passions*. But though the *shedding* *human Blood* was so great a Crime, that God commanded no less a Penalty than Death

Death to be inflicted upon the guilty Person ; yet the highest possible Aggravation of this Crime was, when Men made their Fellow-creatures the Victims of their inhuman *Sacrifices*, as the most acceptable of all Offerings to the Deity. This infernal Custom was carried to so great a Height, that at last they *sacrificed* even their own Children ; and as God denounced the most dreadful Punishment against all those who were this Way criminal, and as Fire and the Sword were the *Instruments* generally us'd to destroy the Victims in this kind of Sacrifices, so they were generally employ'd by God in the *Punishment* of the Authors of these *diabolical Oblations*. That this execrable Practice prevailed through all the Country of *Canaan*, is evident from the History of the Bible ; and that *Fire* under various Emblems was the *chief Object* of *Worship* among that idolatrous People. Now, as the Territories of *Sodom* were a Part of that Country, I don't in the least doubt, but the Inhabitants of that City were equally guilty with the rest of their Neighbours ; and though the abominable *Sin* of *Sodomy* was so reigning a Vice amongst them as even to take its *Name* from that abandon'd City, yet, though, I allow it to be *one* great *Cause*, still I do not think it the *only* One which provoked God to make that Place such a dreadful Scene of unexampled Vengeance. For I observe, that whenever the epithet *Righteous* is given to any Man in the sacred Writings, it constantly implies a

Man,

Man who is distinguished as a *Worshipper of the Only True God*, in Opposition to those who had revolted, and turn'd Idolaters. Now as Moses tells us, that not *Ten Righteous Men* were to be found amongst that whole People ; it seems to me very evident, that they were to the full as guilty of the *same Idolatry*, and, consequently, of the *same impious Rites of Worship* by *human Sacrifices*, as the rest of the *Canaanites*: Though, as the horrid Crime of *Sodomy* seems to have been their *darling Vice*, and remarkably more so than of any of their Neighbours, it seems most certain that, *that Sin alone* fully compleated the *Measure* of their Iniquity, and brought on their Destruction. For if not *Ten Men* could have been found amongst them but what had been *wholly addicted* to this most *unnatural Vice*, *Propagation* would soon have been at an *End*, and the very *Race* of that abominable People must in a short Time have been totally *extinct*. The ancient *Germans*, and other northern Nations. are said by *Cæsar* and some other of the *Roman Historians*, to have been guilty of this inhuman Custom of sacrificing their Fellow-creatures ; but that seems to be a Story taken upon Trust from Hearsay only, or rather forg'd, as I don't find it at all confirmed by proper *Evidence*: I therefore think the Veracity of this Part of their History is greatly to be suspected. But that the *Peruvians* and *Mexicans* had long been guilty of this most execrable *Impiety* ; that they had from Time im-memorial constantly *sacrific'd* a certain Number

of their Prisoners taken in War, to their chief Idols, is a Fact never yet denied, or so much, to the best of my Knowledge, as disputed. When they had at length therefore quite *fill'd up the Measure of their Iniquity*, God permitted the Spaniards to *discover* that Country, and then *delivered them into the Hands* of those rapacious and merciless Invaders.

If then the Almighty constantly shew'd His *Detestation* of this Crime, by the terrible Punishments He inflicted upon the *Offenders*, shall we be at all *surpriz'd* at the Fate of the City of *Lisbon*, or at those repeated Strokes of Divine Vengeance which the unhappy Kindom of *Portugal* still groans under? Need I describe the savage Horrors of the merciless *Inquisition*? Was not every *Auto de Fè* a shocking Scene of religious *Butchery*, where *Numbers* of unhappy Wretches, without Distinction of Age or Sex, were *offer'd* up by *Fire*? And were not those infernal *Sacrifices* always attended with the whole Parade of Ceremonies generally us'd in the most *solemn* Acts of their *Religion*? Do not these miserable Sufferers fall Victims to the *Avarice* as well as to the *Bigotry* of the Inquisitors? Are they not totally stript of their whole Substance? then after they have undergone all the most *agonizing Tortures*, which the *Wit* or *Malice* of their diabolical Tormentors could *invent*, are they not dragg'd out of those horrible Dungeons, weak and emaciated with Hunger, dress'd up in Fool's Coats,

Coats, and even *escorted* to the *Place of Sacrifice* by Persons of the *first Rank*, with all the *Pageantry* of their Religion, amidst the *Acclamations* of the most *ignorant*, and most *bigotted* Race of Men, that ever pretended to the *Name of Christians*? Are not the *greatest Part* of these miserable Victims, People who *differ* from them in *Modes of Faith* only; and are there not sometimes *Christians offer'd up*, who happen to *dissent* from them *only in some Opinions*? Have not religious Men (as they are term'd) the chief *Superintendance* of these most impious Solemnities; and are not those bloody Men (a Race *truly* worthy of their first Founder, that *Firebrand Dominick*) the Persons who preside at that hellish *Tribunal*? Though the *Jews* are the chief Objects of their Cruelty, would not those Christians, whom they *stile Hereticks*, *share* the same dreadful Fate, if they were not afraid of drawing upon themselves the just Resentment of the different Protestant Powers in *Europe*? I hope, Sir, you will excuse the *Warmth* with which I have express'd my Sentiments upon this Subject; for I think there cannot be a more palpable *Mockery* of God, than such an open and impious *Violation* of One of His *first* and *greatest* Laws, under a *Pretence* of doing Him *Honour*; nor a greater *Indignity* offer'd to a *Religion*, of which they boast themselves to be the *purest* and most *zealous Professors*; a Religion which, at the same Time, breathes throughout the most exalted, and

the most *unbounded Charity*.—That Idolatry was the highest Act of Treason which could be committed against God, is evident from almost every Page in the sacred Writings ; and that Destruction was constantly denounced against every Nation which persisted in this Crime : And even prophane History can inform us, how *certainly*, and how *severely* this terrible Decree was put in *execution*, since there is scarce any thing now left besides the bare Memory, of all those powerful Nations, whose final Doom God denounced by His Prophets for their obstinate Perseverance in this Sin, which *Doom* we find recorded in their *several Writings*.—I must own Sir, I have learn'd my *Notion of Idolatry* from the Writings of *Moses* and the Prophets in their *original language* ; nor can I reconcile my self to those *scholastic Distinctions* of the *Latria* or *Supreme Worship* due and paid to God only ; the *Hyperdulia*, or *Middle kind of Worship*, as I may term it, *peculiar to the Virgin Mary*, and their *Dulia* or *Inferior kind of Worship* with which the Catholicks (as they term themselves) are pleas'd to *Honour* their *Saints* of both Sexes. I cannot find the least Foundation for these *Distinctions* in the Scripture ; I must therefore conclude them to be the poor *Subterfuge* of a Set of *Designing Men*, whose *private Interest* first prompted them to contrive this *Mode of Worship*, and who from the same *lucrative View* were *obliged* to support it against all Opposition. *Moses* informs me, that God not

only forbade any Act of Adoration to be paid to any, even the most excellent of his Creatures, but even to make any *Image* or *Resemblance* of *Himself*, lest they should in Time entertain the same *low grovelling Idea of His Divine Nature* as the idolatrous Nations actually did at that Time, and like them degenerate so far at last, by being familiaris'd to those kinds of *material Resemblances*, as to *worship His Creatures*. The Reason for this Prohibition I find thus given by God Himself, *Deut. iv. 15, 16, &c.* “Take ye therefore good Heed unto your selves, (for ye saw no Manner of *Similitude* on the Day that the *Lord* spake unto you in *Horeb* out of the *midst of the Fire*:) Lest ye corrupt your selves and make you a *Graven Image* the *Similitude* of any *Figure*, or *Form*, the *Likeness* of *Male* or *Female*,” &c. And the Reason is gievn afterwards, in the 19th ver. “Lest thou shouldst be *driven*, or tempted to *worship* them and to *serve them*.” Judge then, Sir, how I must have been shock'd, when every Church in the Catholick Countries through all which I have travell'd, struck me with the *blasphemous Representation* of the Supreme Being, under the *Figure* of a *venerable old Man*; either in a *graven Image* or a *painted Picture*. But if any *Image* or *Similitude* of the Supreme God was so *expressly prohibited*, what must we think of that vast Number of *Images* of *He* and *She* Saints with which their Churches are crowded; each of which,

on their respective Holidays, are dress'd out in the reigning Mode of the Country, and bedeck'd with all the Ornaments and even Trinkets of *Modern Finery*? In what Light can we consider the offering Incense, the Genuflections and Prostrations before these *senseless Blocks*, and addressing the *Proto-types*, or Persons they represent, in Terms applicable only to the Supreme Being? All this I have frequently seen and heard; but as I am not meddling with Controversy, I must refer you for ampler Proof to those *blasphemous* Pieces the *Psalter* and *Offices* of the *Virgin Mary*, &c. But before I quit this Subject, I cannot help just mentioning that ludicrous Custom of the Mariners of a *certain* Catholic Nation in ducking the Image of their *Patron*, *Saint Antonio*, in the Sea, after their Prayers to him for a fair Wind have prov'd ineffectual; because I find it exactly parallel to the Behaviour of the *Ostiacks*, a savage People in *Siberia* *. The poor *Ostiack* dresses up his coarse *Wooden God* with *Pieces of Rags, Furs, &c.* (all the *Finery* which he is *Master of*) places *him* in a Tree, besmears him with the Blood and Fat of Beasts, and implores from him *Plenty of Game* and good *Luck* in *bunting*. If he fails of Success, his *Prayers* are changed into *Threatnings*, and if his ill *Luck* still continues, he drags his God from his Tree, throws him into a Pit of Ordure, and bids him lye there till he is in a better Humour. When he judges

* See the History of *Siberia*, by a *Swedish Officer*.

by his *Change of Luck*, that his God's Humour is alter'd too for the better, he takes him out of his filthy Place of Punishment, washes and dresses him up again in fresh Rags, reinstates him, in his *former Post*, besmears him afresh with the Blood and Fat of the Game he has kill'd by Way of *Offering*, and tenderly expostulates with him for his Behaviour to *him* who had been his *constant Worshipper*, frankly telling him, that his own *sullen Humour* was the Occasion of his being treated with so much *Indignity*. If *some Excuse* may be made for the poor ignorant and unenlighten'd *Ostiaick*, *none* certainly can be *admitid* for such People who enjoy the *double Advantage* of *Revelation and Learning*; and if *Idolatry* is defin'd in the sacred Writings "to be the worshipping any *thing* whatsoever, which is stiled "in Hebrew, *Lo El, Not God*," we must conclude the *Portuguese* to be more *gross Idolaters* than *any* of the most *savage Nations*.

I CANNOT here omit one *remarkable Circumstance*, which, I own, strikes me very strongly upon this Occasion. The sacred Writers invariably agree, that *Idolaters* were to be always *punished* with *Death* as guilty of the *highest possible Act of Treason* against their *Almighty Sovereign*; and their various *Idols* with their *Temples* and all the various *Apparatus* of their *Worship*, were commanded constantly to be *destroy'd* by *Fire*. This terrible Decree was sometimes executed by an immediate *Exertion* of the *Divine Power*

Power on some signal Occasions ; but generally by the Agency of human Means in Obedience to the Divine Commands. Now as no authentic Detail of the Particulars of the dreadful Catastrophe of *Lisbon, St. Ubes, Faro, &c.* in that unhappy Kingdom are yet come to hand, I cannot be quite so explicit in the Application of this striking Remark, as I may perhaps be, when we are furnished with a faithful Relation of the whole Affair, and a distinct Description of all the direful Circumstances which attended this Scene of Ruin. All Accounts hitherto received agree ;—That the Earthquake began, and that Fire compleated the Desolation of *Lisbon*; and they only differ as to the Origin of this dreadful Instrument of Destruction. Some Accounts affirm ; that it burst in an extraordinary Manner out of the Fissures of the Earth ; other Relations say, that it arose from the more ordinary Means of Lamps and Candles lighted up before their Altars, or from culinary Fires. From which of these Causes it proceeded, we are not yet able to determine ; but this however we may most certainly conclude ;—that Fire was one principal Agent employ'd in the Subversion of that late magnificent City.

I PROPOS'D, Sir, to have concluded this Letter long before ; but as successive Accounts arriv'd Post after Post of the continued Progress of these various Commotions ; as they came so thick, that, like Job's Messengers, they seemed to tread upon one another's Heels : I could not lay down

my

my Pen, 'till I had made some Inquiry into the *Moral Cause*, which I thought of infinitely more consequence for us to *know* at this *Juncture* than the *Physical*; since from the *Knowledge* of the *Moral Cause* and *that only*, we may learn the *true Means* of *quieting* our *Fears*, and *insuring* our *Safety*. If our *Accounts* are to be depended upon, the first *Perception* of these *Commotions* seems to have been in the *North of Europe*, and they have since been felt, not only in various Parts of *Europe*, but in *Africa* and *North America*; though as *Ships* arrive from more distant Countries, we may very probably hear of the dreadful *Ravages* they may have made in different Parts of the other *Hemisphere*. Their *Directions* seem at present (for we can only judge by the very imperfect *Accouts* we have as yet received) to be chiefly to the *Southward* and the *Westward*, and what *Assurance* can we have, that they may not continue their *Progress round the Globe*, and at last *terminate* where they *first began*, and *perhaps* too with *redoubled Fury*? — The more I reflect upon the *Circumstances* attending these *Commotions*, the more I am confirm'd in my Opinion, that the *true philosophical Solution* of these terrible *Phenomena* is to be sought for *only* in the *sacred Writings*, and in their *Original Language only*. For I could never yet meet with any *Translation* that ever came up to the *Force* and *Energy* of the *Hebrew*; nay, in numerous Instances, (which I may probably have Occasion to take Notice of

in my subsequent Letters) have so much as given us the true genuine Idea or Meaning, which the *Word*, when traced up to its *Root*, most evidently carries in the *Original*. I am still more and more convinced, that the *Great Deep* is the Place from whence all these strange *Commotions* take their Rise, and that from the violent and repeated Impulses of the Waters through the *Fountains* or Apertures of the *Great Deep*, all these *Water-quakes*; all those quick and unusual Fluxes and Refluxes of Tides; those terrible Inundations from the Sea, and furious Eruptions of Water out of Mountains, ting'd with the Colour of Minerals lodg'd in the Fissures through which they were impell'd, may be accounted for, and, in my Opinion, from that only. From that mighty *Store-house* of *Waters*, and that *Treasury* of the *Winds*, which are emphatically stiled in the Scripture, God's *Store-houses* and God's *Treasuries*, I deduce the Origin of all Hurricanes, Tornadoes, Whirlwinds and Water-spouts, and those Kinds of *Phenomena*, which are a Part of the *Wonders* of God in the *Deep*, and happen so frequently in the hot Climates. I have frequently observed in the main Ocean (when we were at a great Distance from Land, and the *Weather* perfectly calm) a *Column* of *Vapour* rise slowly out of the Sea, ascend gradually higher and higher, and grow thicker and darker by the Accession of Vapours continually ascending, till it formed a Body of Clouds of vast Extent and an amazing Blackness.

Blackness. The Consequence of this *Phenomenon* was always a very hard Gale of Wind accompanied with terrible Thunder and Lightning and a very heavy Rain, which continued till that *Body of Vapours* was totally *dissipated*. I have observ'd the same *Phenomenon* both in the *Baltic* and *Northern Sea* in the *Summer Time*, and undoubtedly the same might be *observ'd* there in the *Depth of Winter*, if those Seas were navigable at that Season ; as Thunder-storms frequently happen, even in Winter, in the highest Latitudes that are inhabited. That the Sun may have some Influence in assisting the *Ascent* of this *visible Column* of Vapours when *at*, and above the *Surface* of the Ocean, is very probable ; but that the *Heat* of the Sun (at that time equally diffus'd over the vast Ocean where I first observ'd this *Phenomenon*) should only affect one very small Part of it and not the other, seems to me impossible ; for the *Base* of the *Column* of *Vapour* at the *Snrface* of the Water did not seem to be *half* a Mile in *Extent*, and the *Distance* of it from the Ship I then was in, was not *judg'd* to be a *League* by our ablest Mariners. No, Sir, it is evident to me, that this *Column* arose *through* the Ocean from those immense *Treasures* of God, out of which He *calls forth* His *Storms* and *Tempests* ; and the terrible Thunder and Lightning, which ensued, convinces me, that it was violently impelled through the *Fissures* of the Earth beneath the *Area* of the Ocean, and

and was strongly *impregnated* with *Particles* of the *Minerals*, as Sulphur, Nitre, &c. which were lodged in those *Fissures*; which Particles it hurried upwards along with it in its *Passage*. I am still more confirmed in my Opinion, when I reflect upon those frequent and violent *Eruptions* of *Vapours* in *Greenland* even in the *Midst* of the severest *Winter*. The *Danish* Missionaries, who have been *Eye-witnesses* of this *Phenomenon*, assure us, that these *Vapours* arise out of the Sea with an *Explosion* equal to the *Noise* of *Thunder*; tear vast *Rifts* in solid *Bodies* of *Ice* of an incredible *Thickness*, and appear in the Form of a *thick Mist* above the Surface, and are so hot as to *singe* the *Eye-brows*, and *Beards*, and even *scorch* the *Faces* of the Inhabitants, who are so unfortunate as to be surpriz'd and envelop'd in them at the Time of their Eruption. Now, as the Sun is at that Time at, or near its *Summer Solstice* in the *Southern Hemisphere*, and, consequently, at its greatest Distance from that Part of the *Globe*; it is not possible that it can have any Share in the Production of this *odd Phenomenon*.—That the *Air* or *Ether*, and *Light*, including *Fire*, are the *Principal Agents* employ'd on these Occasions under the immediate Direction of the *Ruahh*, will, I hope, appear very evidently in my other *Letters*, when I shall *descend* to *particulars*. And in Reality, are we *Judges* of the most immense compressive Power of the *Ethers*, “in “which is the *Strength* of *God*,” as it is most

emphatically express'd in Scripture? Can we estimate the amazing Force and Velocity which can be exerted by Light including Fire? We may indeed form some Idea of it from the dreadful and almost instantaneous Effects of Lightning, and also (though in a much inferior Degree) from the Effects of Rays of the Sun collected and concentr'd by a Concave Speculum.

You will observe, Sir, that in this long Letter, I have only thrown out Hints relative to the Principles of the Mosaic Philosophy, and that till we have a distinct and circumstantial Detail of the Particulars of these various Phenomena founded upon proper, authentic Evidence, it would be Time thrown away to attempt their Solution. For the Accounts we have receiv'd at present are so vague and imperfect, and sometimes so contradictory, that they seem rather calculated to amuse or astonish, than to inform us. I must beg Leave, however, to conclude with a Remark which I had omitted; because I think it extremely appropriate to the present State of our own Nation.— The Prophet Ezekiel tells us in the 16th chap. 49th ver. “that the Iniquity of Sodom was Pride, “ Fullness of Bread and Abundance of Idleness.”—The word Sheket in Hebrew, here translated Idleness, conveys a very extensive Idea, and means that Kind of voluptuous Indolence, which arises from the Security of Peace, and the Affluence of all the various Means of Luxury; and is, strictly speaking, the Idleness of the Mind; and

is to be distinguished from the Hebrew word *Gnat-selab*, which signifies the Laziness, or the Idleness of the Body as to *manual Labour*. The Idleness of the *Mind* most certainly includes the *Idea* of the Idleness of the *Body*; and as the *former* was the great *Source* of Vice in Persons of the higher Rank in Life; so the latter was very probably the *Bane* of the lowest Class of People, and might give rise to Thefts, Robberies, and such rapacious Acts of Violence, as we our selves too fatally *experience* at this very Time, and from the very same Cause. The *Idleness* of *Sodom* therefore consisted in what we now express by the fashionable Term of killing Time; that is, in wickedly throwing away that *Time* which should have been spent in the *Discharge* of their *Duty* towards God and Man, not only in the Commission of the most atrocious Crimes, such as that infernal Vice to which that City gave Name; but in all the other Consequences of Luxury arising from Wealth and Plenty, such as Dress, Diversions, &c.—Should we now bring the *present State* of the *Manners* of our own Country to this *Test*, I fear the Resemblance would be too striking.—If Idolatry consisted in transferring the *Allegiance* due only to the *Creator* and paying it to *His Creatures*; Infidelity, a Crime which spreads so greatly in our Nation, is an actual *Renunciation* of all *Allegiance* to God, and saying, “ We will not have Thee to rule over us.” Both are *overt Acts* of flat *Rebellion* and *Treason* against

against our Almighty Sovereign, and both are equally doom'd to the same Punishment. I believe too, that the almost total Corruption of Manners, and the *infatiate* Rage, as I may justly term it, for *Diversions*, such as *Cards*, the *Publick Gardens*, *Theatrical Entertainments*, &c. which prevail so immoderately in this Country, nay, even at this most alarming Juncture, too nearly resemble the Idleness of *Sodom*.

To draw a perfect *Portrait* of the present State of this Nation, would be a *Task* too *invincible*: I must therefore refer you to that strong *Picture* of the *Manners* of the *Britons* when they were totally over-run by the *Saxons*, as drawn by *Gildas* *, and as you find the Resemblance more or less similar, so you may judge of what *may*, or *may not* be expected at this Juncture.—In the mean Time I know but one Way to deprecate the Divine Vengeance, and stop the *up-lifted* Thunder-bolt; which is, by having Recourse to those *Means* which God himself has appointed for that *End* in the sacred Writings.—Would but each of us endeavour to be a *Good Man*, then—

*Si Fractus illabatur Orbis
Impavidum ferient Ruinae.* HOR.

* See *Gildas de Excid. Britan.*

I am, S.I.R,

Yours, &c.



